

Child Protection Accountability Commission
January 9, 2002
9:00 a.m.

Those in attendance: Linda Shannon/DFS, Diane Walsh/DOJ, M.C. Landis/OCA, Teresa Williams/NCCPD, Mark Daniels/DSP, Trish Hearn/DSCYF, Joseph Smack/DFS, Candace Charkow/DFS, Laura Miles/DFS, Mike Chalmers/News Journal, Anne Pedrick/OCA, Tania Culley/OCA, Dr. Allan DeJong/A.I. duPont Hospital for Children, Commissioner Patricia Stewart/Family Court, Carlyse Giddins/DFS, Mary Ball Morton/DSCYF, Roger Blevins/CPRB, Linda C. Wolfe/DOE, Gwen Angelet/CMH, Mary Lou Edgar/Interagency Committee on Adoptions, Rep. Pamela Maier, John Humphrey/CAC, Judge Peggy Ableman/Superior Court, Jane Brady/AG, Janice Mink/Grassroots Citizens for Children, Lynne Howard/CPAC, Sen. Cathy Cloutier, Jim Apostolico/DOJ, Cari DeSantis/DSCYF

- I. Attorney General Jane Brady distributed a letter to CPAC members along with the AG's report on Child Victimization from 1998.
- II. Foster Care Subcommittee- Janice Mink/Grassroots Citizens for Children. She has recently been appointed to the CMH advisory panel. There are not enough mental health providers who specialize in treating abused/neglected children. There are often waiting lists for adequate care but these professionals are not trained to do this type of work. The Department is looking at how they can provide a unified assessment for all children that will be a consistent assessment tool. Carlyse Giddins spoke that they are currently meeting with front line staff to see how this will work. Gwen Angelet stated that CMH is doing research into why there is currently a waiting list. January 29th is the next Foster Care Subcommittee.
- III. Training Subcommittee-Anne Pedrick/OCA reported that the Abuse Intervention Committee has approved a position that will be under Prevent Child Abuse Delaware. This training coordinator will be the "resource/contact point" for almost all of the "system wide" training in child welfare within Delaware.
- IV. Legislative Subcommittee- HB198 was discussed by Tania Culley. There are many concerns regarding this bill. There will continue to be a push for HB 198. Many wrote letters last session. Attorney General Brady suggested that CPAC send another letter against it. OCA is contemplating new legislation regarding Child Witnesses in Civil Proceedings as there have been some issues with lower counties putting children on the stand. Carlyse Giddins mentioned that DSCYF is interested in revising legislation regarding family court giving custody to the department instead of the individual divisions.

Tania Culley gave an update of the Child Abuse Registry Workgroup. Many individuals that are complaining of the registry really do not want modifications but “want it gone”.

- V. Pilot project between DFS and People’s Place-Linda Shannon discussed the Children Witnessing Domestic Violence committee and the various subcommittees that have formed from that committee. These include: confidentiality, children witnessing DV, and policy. Linda had the opportunity to attend the National Conference on this issue in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. The work that the committee has done has led to the evolution of the pilot project. A domestic violence advocate will assist and “jointly” respond to the home with DFS where there has been domestic violence. It is in the beginning stages and is about to begin, so some of the details of what types of cases are still being tested. They would like to respond to mild/lower level domestic violence along with severe felony level cases. The same pilot project is hoped to happen in New Castle County between Child, Inc. and DFS; however they are awaiting funding through the VAWA grant. Delaware was recognized by the National Association of Attorneys General in December and they conducted a site visit. They did a survey of all of the states regarding domestic violence and Delaware stood out. There will be a national conference Feb 4-7th on Issues and Best Practices and Delaware will be highlighted as a model system.
- VI. Child/Family Services Review – Candy Charkow of DFS spoke of this review conducted by the Federal government in March of 2001. Seventeen other states have been reviewed. So far Delaware leads the nation, with the exception of one other state. There are seven systemic factors and DFS met all of them and met six out of the seven outcomes. DFS’ program improvement plan has been accepted. The outcome that needs improvement was moving kids to adoption in a timely fashion. This was based on the national standard on moving kids to adoption. Candy explained the ASFA process and how they are looking at redesigning their internal system to meet the criteria. They will need a legislative change and help from Family Court. Currently TPR is looked upon as a separate action and from the date of filing it can take up to 90 days/minimum just to get a hearing date set. They are hoping to get family court jurisdiction at the time the dependency/neglect petition is filed. They are also looking at which cases can meet the TPR criteria early on in the investigation and possibly screen them better. Mary Lou Edgar/Tressler Ctr. praised the Dept.in the year 2000 adoption increases were up 186%.
- VII. DFS Update- Carlyse Giddins/DFS. Carlyse distributed a sheet on DFS statistics. Turnover is low and staff feel that “we are all in this together”. Rep. Pam Maier asked about respite care. Mary Lou Edgar asked for support for post legal adoption funding services. There are IV-B funds available. There is supposedly 27,000 earmarked for the State of Delaware. Senator Cloutier

would like to be involved with Mary Lou Edgar. 15-20% of all adoptions disrupt and fail nationally. Due to supportive services with Mary Lou's group, only 7% have disrupted at Tressler. DSCYF was recently given the Quality Award as an Area of Commitment by the Governor.

- VIII. Child Death Review Commission. Time was given to read Attorney General Brady's letter of January 9, 2002. Several recommendations were made, but those agreed upon by vote were the following recommendations that Lynn Howard will present to Dr. Callery of CDRC. The first recommendation is that in cases of a child death by abuse and/or neglect that there be a system-wide, root cause analysis process utilized in the Child Death Review Commission. There were no oppositions to this motion. The second recommendation is that this review be conducted in full within three months of the child's death. One member abstained voting for this motion. The third recommendation is that the results of the panel promptly release a report of recommendations for system improvement on that child's death to the CDRC and to the next scheduled CPAC (in executive session), subject to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act. Upon completion of the criminal prosecution, these recommendations will be released to the public. There were no oppositions to this third motion. Janice Mink shared her concerns that the panels only spend 90 minutes for approximately 5 cases, this could only be 18-20 minutes to review a case. Jane mentioned that their focus is on whether or not a death is preventable or not preventable. It was not designed to be an in-depth analysis. The Child Death Review Panels are often sold short by lack of staff and their annual report reflects this lack of staffing. The issue of self-reporting was discussed, along with trust among the panel members. Linda Shannon mentioned that she participated in a mock review when developing the Child Death Review Panels and it was intended for abuse/neglect cases to take longer than they are currently reviewed.
- IX. OCA Update. Angela Fowler has started as the Kent/Sussex Deputy Child Advocate. OCA has had 547 referrals. Currently there are 145 children who have guardian *ad litem* attorneys representing them. Anne Pedrick is working with the Division of Family Services on history training, participating in Root Cause Analyses, and joined the Child/Family Services Review in South Dakota in October.
- X. Child Advocacy Center-John Humphrey discussed the CAC's expanded space and that they will be having an open house in the near future. Their Milford site is coming off of Federal Funds so they are asking for a significant increase. The CAC is an important component of the system and they need the Commission's support.

Next CPAC Meeting is April 10th at 9am/Governor's conference Room.

